

Congressman Jesse Jackson, Jr., today said, "It was with a heavy heart and great sadness that I received word that Ossie Davis had died. We may never again see the combination of gifted and multi-talented entertainer, alongside political commitment and social justice activism. My prayers and thoughts go out to his wife of over 56 years, Ruby Dee. I was with them both recently at a New York event celebrating *The Nation Magazine*.

"Born in 1917 in Cogdell, Georgia, Ossie Davis was truly a renaissance man - actor, writer, director and producer for stage, screen and television. He has been a central figure in the entertainment industry for over five decades. Alongside his professional involvement, he was a social justice activist who fought to increase the number and different rolls for African Americans in the entertainment industry. He was also active in the civil rights struggles of the 1950s and 1960s, and was a peace activist. He was associated with W.E.B. DuBois, A. Philip Randolph, Langston Hughes, Richard Wright and Paul Robeson - and never abandoned him, as other entertainers did, even when he ran afoul of the law for his association with communists and for his empathy with the Soviet Union.

"He was also involved with Malcolm X. In a biographical book he and Ruby Dee wrote together, Davis told of how a prior commitment caused them to miss the Harlem 1965 rally at which Malcolm X was assassinated. He delivered the eulogy at Malcolm X's funeral and repeated it in a voice-over in Spike Lee's 1992 film on the slain leader's life.

"We will miss this wonderful entertainer and friend of peace and justice. May his soul rest in peace," Jackson concluded.